

Ridley Township, PA -- On Friday, February 9, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) hosted and moderated a town hall, public meeting on the FAA's proposed airspace redesign and airport expansion at Philadelphia International Airport. The event was held at the Ridley Township Municipal Building. The FAA's Airspace Redesign Manager and the Congressman's Expert Advisory Board were on-hand to update the public on the current status of the FAA projects, discuss next steps, and take questions from concerned residents.

Following a meeting with the Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Joe arranged for tonight's event, which was the first time since the FAA's airspace redesign has been proposed that the FAA's Airspace Redesign Manager has been permitted to directly answer questions from concerned citizens in any locale, including Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"Today's public town hall is the latest in a series of discussions I have held to ensure the FAA's proposal is objectively assessed and held accountable for conducting a complete study of the economic impact, health effects, and the environmental impact of the airspace redesign project and other further airport expansions impacting my constituents," noted Joe. "This community event enables me to incorporate diverse facts and views in my effort to fully mitigate any negative impact of flight pattern changes. I plan to work fully with all the District-elected and non-elected leaders, as well as all appropriate federal, executive, and congressional officials, interested to ensure the best outcome for our community.

"I believe a thriving airport is important to the economic development of our region; however, I am committed to requiring the FAA to pursue a measured and sustainable course that fully mitigates any proposal that adversely impacts our district and its citizens."

Joe has met with an advisory board of local and national experts nine times — including several meetings with the FAA — to assess the impacts of the FAA's proposal on citizens, covering critical areas ranging from sound and noise, to educational development and health, the impact on ground safety and property values, and the need for greater long-term planning. The board was convened to ensure that all issues regarding the FAA's proposal were objectively covered, so that Joe might then work with the Secretary of Transportation and the FAA, as well as congress people on full mitigation and accountability for the economic, health, and environmental impacts of airspace changes they are proposing on Joe's constituents.

Joe's FAA Expert Advisory Board is composed of recognized national and local experts on aviation planning, sound/noise, air emissions, educational development, health, and economic development. The FAA Expert Advisory Board has assisted Joe in developing a briefing paper and action plan to detail the way forward to ensure that a full benefit-cost accounting guides the appropriate mitigation strategies to be implemented. Joe's briefing report/action plan outlines five major issue areas that are of great public concern including: comprehensive long term planning, noise, air quality, ground safety, cumulative effects, aviation development streamlining, and addressing the challenges reported by a General Accounting Office report released back in 2000.

To assist in this effort, in recent weeks Joe has:

- On December 14th, Joe held the first meeting of his FAA Expert Advisory Board.
- On December 19th, Joe was briefed by FAA Airspace Manager Steve Kelley.
- On December 28th, Joe held a follow-up meeting/report status with his FAA Expert Advisory Board.
- On January 17th, Joe held a conference call/report status with FAA Expert Advisory Board.
- On January 21st, Joe convened a meeting between the FAA Expert Advisory Board and FAA Airspace Manager Steve Kelley.
- On January 22d, Joe spoke to the Subcommittee on Aviation Chairman Jerry Costello about the FAA redesign.
- On January 24th, Joe met with Deputy Secretary of Transportation Maria Cino to discuss the FAA Airspace Redesign and Capacity Enhancement.
- On February 6, Joe spoke to Steve Kelley and his FAA Expert Advisory Board about the FAA Town Hall Event on Friday, February 9 in Ridley Township.

During his discussion with Deputy Secretary Cino, she agreed to come to the district to listen to, and discuss with, Joe's constituents the FAA airspace redesign and capacity enhancement. Also, during this meeting, Joe spoke with Deputy Secretary Cino about concerns raised by the public and his Expert Advisory Board, including the impact of noise, air quality, ground safety, and cumulative effects resulting from the FAA proposal. Joe was pleased with Deputy Secretary Cino's response to reconsider the issues he raised, and presented to her in a briefing paper, as well as her agreement to participate in a town hall meeting. Joe believes this provides a great opportunity to move the issue forward. Additionally, Joe has spoken several times with Congressman Jerry Costello, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Aviation, who will also be coming to visit the district to listen to the public's comments and concerns.

In December 2005, the FAA issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for redesigning the airspace surrounding the NY/NJ/Philadelphia Metropolitan Areas. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated that the FAA failed to consider the full environmental impact of its proposed changes.

During his campaign in September, Joe Sestak joined concerned residents at a Ridley Park neighborhood to respond to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) proposed plan to redesign the airspace patterns above Philadelphia International Airport. His campaign created a comprehensive website intended to educate concerned citizens with objective information about the impact of the FAA's proposed changes.

Following the election, Joe announced the formation of a FAA Expert Advisory Board to address a number of critical issues, including health issues, emergency preparedness, air pollution, property values, and the full impact of noise when accounting for the proposed airport capacity expansions. Joe also contacted the Delaware County Council to follow-up on their efforts in the area. Joe has been working with his advisory board to present a briefing report/action plan so he can work best to influence the federal level-as well as a District-elected leader-to fully mitigate any impact of the FAA's proposal.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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